

# FAIRYTALE MASTER'S GREAT NEW DOUBLE

Steven Spielberg, the wonderboy master of cinema make-believe, has done it again.

He has come up with two more box office blockbusters that should pack cinemas throughout the world for the rest of the year.

Poltergeist and E.T. — The Extraterrestrial are two different but in a way strangely similar movies, and both are virtually guaranteed to set new box office figures.

Poltergeist is a tremendously scary and spectacular ghost story with special effects that will make your hair stand on end.



STEVEN SPIELBERG

From

JOHN HISCOCK in Los Angeles

E.T. is a charming, contemporary fairytale about a visiting botanist from another planet, offering a vision of innocence and hope.

Both are set in the suburban background that Richard Dreyfuss inhabited in Close Encounters Of The Third Kind and both spring from the fears and hopes of 34-year-old Spielberg's fertile imagination.

"Poltergeist is what I fear and E.T. is what I love," he explained.

"One is about suburban evil and the other is about suburban good. I had different motivations in both instances.

"In Poltergeist I wanted to terrify and I also wanted to amuse.

"I tried to mix the laughs and the screams together. Poltergeist is the darker side of my nature — it's

when I was scaring my younger sisters half to death when we were growing up — and E.T. is my optimism about the future."

The real star of E.T. is the alien itself — a funny, frightened creature who inadvertently wanders into the home of a suburban divorcee with three small children who secretly take on the responsibility for its safety.

The children are first terrified of the creature who looks like a walking toadstool with huge eyes, but in time they learn to share their toys and knowledge with the lovable little creature.

## \$1m robot

The E.T. robot cost a million dollars to create and has more than 65 points of movement.

It is so realistic that during the filming the cast and crew frequently found themselves talking to it.

The film is full of the capacity for wonder that, combined with his prodigious imagination, has formed nearly all Spielberg's films from Jaws to Close Encounters and Raiders Of The Lost Ark.

"In the past I've made movies about experiences that I've never had because that way I can explore all those what ifs," he said. "I'm all the characters in my movies.

"I was as much Indiana Jones as Harrison Ford was.

"And in E.T. I was E.T.'s eyes. Throughout the movie I had to imagine what it would be like to be a creature visiting Earth and what life would be like from this perspective.

Spielberg has been behind a camera since he



The E.T. robot cost \$1 million.

made his first home movie at 12.

The son of a computer specialist and a concert pianist mother who were divorced when he was a teenager, Spielberg says he was a weird, skinny kid with pimples who did not have many friends.

## New world

He discovered that movies opened up a new world of possibilities.

At 12 he filmed a collision between his toy trains and at 13 he made a three-minute film featuring one of his friends robbing a stage coach and counting the money.

At 16 he made Firelight, a 24-hour science-fiction

movie that anticipated Close Encounters.

"I have a real chemical imbalance between what's real and what's not," said Spielberg.

"I tend to side with what isn't real in picking a subject more than I do with what's really happening out there in the streets. Enough directors make movies that reflect life as we see it every day.

"There's no proof that UFOs or ghosts exist but it's always nice to imagine what you think could be there.

"The best movies I've seen are ones that are slightly above one's normal eye level — something you have to reach up to suspend your disbelief."



# E.T.

## A bug-eyed alien with red, glowing heart has become an idol in the U.S.

By BILL HIGHAM

"He was a person," mourned Henry Thomas, the 10-year-boy actor who co-starred with "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial" in the block-busting movie of the same name.

E.T. is a little over a metre tall, an affable alien from outer space who is responsible for one of the biggest waves of public affection to sweep America in the history of the cinema.

In just three weeks, the Steven Spielberg movie took more than \$US130 million and still the cinema queues are forming.

A grey-green, bug-eyed little monster who resembles a giant tortoise without its shell, E.T. speaks in an electronically distorted voice, has only a 10-word vocabulary, and at first glance is the stuff of children's nightmares.

But the gentle little stranger has pulverised the world's most popular alien, the man of steel, by beating the early box office success of Superman, II, and now, predictably, is destined to overtake the astonishing \$400 million amassed by Star Wars to become the biggest cinema box office hit of all time.

Even before the movie's release, industry marketing experts at sneak previews were predicting it would be a summer smash and it has been called "The best Disney movie Disney never made".

### Opposition

And the little alien's trip into unknown territory wasn't strewn with roses.

He encountered fierce opposition from a heavy-weight crop of 1982 productions, including Sylvester Stallone's Rocky



E.T., the bug-eyed monster who's breaking box office records — and hearts.



Drew Barrymore, 7, bestows a kiss on her plastic co-star, E.T.

## TOP 12 MOVIES

Until E.T. made his earthly premiere Star Wars headed the list of the world's top movie money-spinners of all time.

The Top 12 money earners are recorded here by Variety, the show business newspaper. The figures represent only distribution rentals paid to the film studios in the U.S. and Canada and inflation is not taken into account. Figures are in millions.

(1) Star Wars, \$185; (2) The Empire Strikes Back, \$134; (3) Jaws (Spielberg), \$133; (4) Grease, \$97; (5) Raiders of the Lost Ark (Spielberg), \$91; (6) The Exorcist, \$89; (7) The Godfather, \$86; (8) Superman, \$80; (9) The Godfather Part II, \$79; (10) The Godfather Part III, \$79; (11) The Godfather Part IV, \$79; (12) The Godfather Part V, \$79.

chanically or electronically.

The little creature is capable of 150 separate motions.

He can wrinkle his nose, furrow his brow, use his long fingers, stretch his neck, heal cuts and bruises, and reduce hardened adult audiences to tears by making his tiny heart glow red with joy.

Spielberg, 34, the little suburban boy who became the world's most successful movie director, laid his



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But little E.T. turned his gentle bug eyes on the audience and started a love affair with America — not to mention red faces at Hollywood's Columbia Pictures.

Not only are studio chiefs forced to watch glumly as a midget alien trounces Annie stars Albert Finney and the cute and adorable Debbie Quinn at the box office, (the movie is struggling to pay back its \$42 million budget) but they have to suffer the humiliation of having turned down E.T.

Universal Studios picked



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up the option and proved gleefully that just about everyone is a kid at heart.

Perhaps the reason E.T., a weird little creature made from glass-fibre, plastic and foam rubber, has such mass appeal is linked to our era of recession, unemployment, and social paranoia.

Here is escapism that appeals to that innocence of childhood still lurking somewhere, in all of us.

From the opening scene in the movie, when a curious, bell-shaped spaceship lifts off into a blue sky full of twinkling stars and

leaves behind a member of its party, a dejected little figure, marooned alone in an alien atmosphere with little chance of survival, the audience is hooked.

The man who made E.T. for the screen is Italian painter and sculptor, Carlo Rambaldi, who was hired by Spielberg after one special-effects crew spent \$700,000 to make the little alien and failed.

Each layer of E.T.'s musculature, connected to an aluminium and steel skeleton, is responsible for facial expression or body movement controlled me-

chanically or electronically.

The little creature is capable of 150 separate motions.

He can wrinkle his nose, furrow his brow, use his long fingers, stretch his neck, heal cuts and bruises, and reduce hardened adult audiences to tears by making his tiny heart glow red with joy.

Spielberg, 34, the little suburban boy who became the world's most successful movie director, laid his reputation on the line for E.T.

The movie's young human stars, Henry Thomas, who plays Elliot, the little boy who befriends E.T. and smuggles him home, and Drew Barrymore, 7, granddaughter of the late Hollywood legend, John Barrymore, had to suffer the agonies of keeping the movie, and E.T., a secret from their school friends during filming.

Much will still be written about E.T. And chances are nothing will explain its success better than young Henry Thomas's sad reflection after filming was finished.

"He was a person."